



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Campylobacteriosis

What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis is an infection of the gut caused by *Campylobacter* bacteria. These bacteria are a frequent cause of food poisoning.

How do you get it?

You get campylobacteriosis by eating foods or by drinking water contaminated with the bacteria. You can also get it from infected people or pets especially kittens and puppies.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of campylobacteriosis include mild to severe diarrhea (often bloody), stomach pain, fever, nausea, and vomiting.

When do symptoms start?

The symptoms usually start 2 to 5 days after infection with the bacteria and may continue for a week.

What is the treatment for campylobacteriosis?

Most persons with campylobacteriosis will recover without treatment. Severe diarrhea and/or vomiting over a long time may cause the body to lose fluid too quickly. Lost fluids should be replaced by drinking liquids such as fruit juices, soups, and special fluids called oral rehydration salts. A doctor can prescribe medications for severe cases or to shorten the length of illness. This may be important for food handlers, health care workers, and children in day care.

For how long is a person contagious?

Infected people will shed the bacteria in their stools from a few days to as long as a week or more.

Should an infected person stay home from school or work?

Students with diarrhea should stay home from school until the diarrhea stops. Food handlers, day care workers and health care workers should not return to work until they have their doctor's permission.

How can you keep from getting it?

Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet, after changing diapers, after touching pets or cleaning up after them, and especially before preparing or eating food. After changing diapers, wash the child's hands as well as your own.

Do not drink untreated water (ponds, streams, rivers).

Do not drink unpasteurized (raw) milk or eat raw or undercooked meat, and refrigerate foods promptly after purchase.

Always treat raw poultry and other meats as if they were contaminated. Keep food that will be eaten raw, such as vegetables, from becoming contaminated by animal products. After handling raw meat do not lick your fingers, touch other foods, or smoke a cigarette before washing your hands.

Wash cutting boards thoroughly after contact with each food, so that the boards do not contaminate the next food prepared.

Cook poultry and meats to an even inner temperature (usually 165°F or higher), especially when using a microwave. Check food temperatures with a thermometer.

Avoid sexual practices that may permit fecal-oral transmission.

For more information, see the CDC's website at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/campylobacter_g.htm